

MBK-008
1 April 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report--Bangkok Bureau--March 1983

I. GENERAL

A. FBIS coverage of the 7-12 March Nonaligned summit conference in New Delhi was accomplished smoothly despite the complex interbureau coordination arrangements required. Since Delhi Radio carried abbreviated and delayed coverage of all but the opening and closing sessions, the heaviest coverage burden fell on Okinawa Bureau, which was able to monitor fuller coverage from Delhi Television via its Roset. Most bureaus, however, were able to help with the processing load by filing home-source texts of speeches by leaders from their individual primary coverage areas.

B. In a surprise move following the narrow defeat of a military faction-sponsored constitutional amendment resolution in the parliament upon its third and last reading, Thai Prime Minister Prem dissolved parliament and announced elections for 18 April, 3 months earlier than the scheduled elections and only 3 days before a new election system is to take effect under the current constitution. The new system's provision for single constituency districts, in which voters will have to vote for complete blocks of party candidates rather than split votes among the individual candidates without regard to party affiliation, was primary target of the military faction's amendment resolution. Prem justified the action as a means to deflate political tension on the issue which has fed coup rumors for several months.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. The bureau began covering the Bangladesh news agency Dhaka BSS in English on 15 March after frequencies for the service were located by London Bureau.

2. On 18 March regular priority one coverage of the clandestine Voice of the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea radio was reduced to a single Cambodian-language cast.

3. The name of the official Lao Communist Party newspaper, SIANG PASASON (Voice of the People) was changed to PASASON (The People) on 22 March to mark the 28 Lao party anniversary.

B. Communications

The bureau has received final approval on its proposal to switch its

primary backup communications circuit to the State CPU high-speed ITT satellite circuit. Preliminary testing on the system's configuration will commence when the Embassy CPU has an area technician available.

C. Lateral Services

1. Effective 30 March the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) was added as a local consumer for all incoming and outgoing substantive material on Thailand.

2. During the month the bureau translated nearly 50 pages of a Lao Government study plan for the American Embassy in Vientiane.

D. Technical

1. Twenty-two model 767 Sony cassette recorders, purchased locally, were modified to work directly with the model DRC-313A dual recorder timer. The recorder has a larger counter and faster forward/reverse capability than the old Panasonic model. Four recorders are already in use with excellent results.

2. Two watch officers from [] visited the bureau on a familiar-STAT
ization tour during the month. The remaining three watch officers will visit in the near future.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

[] was formally named [] Site Supervisor on
17 March. STAT

B. Buildings and Grounds

The bureau's balconies remained sealed off throughout the month, as swarms of workmen are repainting the [] building, presumably so it won't STAT
look shabby against the new stock exchange building nearing completion next door. The scaffolding along one side of the building invites the ever-intrepid Bangkok "kamoy" cat burglar to view the cityscape from the bureau's 14th and 15th-floor terraces.

IV. VISITS

A. A team of inspectors, on TDY at the embassy, paid an unofficial visit to the bureau on 10 March.

B. Regional Engineer [] visited from Okinawa on TDY 15-19 March. STAT
[] reviewed bureau upgrading projects since his last visit and discussed STAT
current engineering concepts and programs, including training in satellite operations.

[]
Chief
FBIS, Bangkok Bureau

AEB:mk

Production Report